

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 EURE-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00
 INR-05 CIAE-00 USIE-00 L-01 PRS-01 H-01 DHA-02
 SCA-01 INRE-00 /039 W
 -----231725Z 008117 /43
O 231550Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2936

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 SOFIA 1096

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, CVIS, BU (MAREVA, RUMYANA AND YORDANKA)
SUBJECT: MAREV CASE CLOSE TO SOLUTION; GOB SAYS GIRLS MAY LEAVE
WHENEVER THEY WISH

REF: SOFIA 1090

1. SUMMARY: ACTING CHIEF OF MFA CONSULAR DIVISION INFORMED
CHARGE MAY 23 THAT "AS HAS ALWAYS BEEN TRUE IN PAST", MAREVA
GIRLS WILL BE GIVEN PASSPORTS TO LEAVE BULGARIA EITHER FOR
VISIT OR FOR IMMIGRATION WHENEVER THEY CHOOSE TO APPLY FOR
THEM. GOB FIRST PREFERENCE REMAINS FOR MRS. MAREV TO VISIT,
TALK TO HER DAUGHTERS, AND "TAKE THEM BACK WITH HER TO US."
SHE NEED NOT FEAR BEING HELD IN BULGARIA: "EVEN IF SHE
WISHED TO REMAIN, WE WOULD NOT ALLOW HER TO DO SO PAST THE
TERM OF HER VISA." ALTERNATIVELY, IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT THE
GIRLS' GRANDMOTHER OR OTHER CLOSE RELATIVE TRAVEL WITH THEM
TO US, BECAUSE "GIRLS ARE TOO YOUNG TO TRAVEL SO FAR ALONE."
BULGARIAN AMBASSADOR POPOV BEING INSTRUCTED TO SEEK MEETING
WITH MAREVS AT STATE DEPT TO INFORM THEM OF ABOVE IN
PRESENCE OF STATE DEPT OFFICIALS. CHILDREN WILL BE
RELEASED FROM ORPHANAGE TO CUSTODY OF CLOSE RELATIVE
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FOLLOWING END OF SCHOOL TERM (FIRST WEEK OF JUNE) AND
MAREVS MAY TELEPHONE THEM THERE. MFA OFFICIAL POINTEDLY
NOTED THAT CASE HAS NEVER BEEN DISCUSSED IN BULGARIAN
PRESS OR TV (ONLY PARTLY TRUE). WE BELIEVE CASE NOW
AT POINT OF SOLUTION IF MAREVS IN US WILL BEHAVE CIRCUM-
SPECTLY AND VIGIL SHOULD NOW CEASE. ALSO BELIEVE RFE
SHOULD BE ASKED TO DROP ALL COMMENT ON CASE. END SUMMARY.

2. NIKOLAI KOVACHEV, ACTING CHIEF OF MFA CONSULAR DEPT,
ASKED CHARGE AND CONSUL TO CALL LATE AFTERNOON MAY 23
TO DISCUSS MAREV CASE, WITH FOLLOWING RESULT:

A. "AS HAS ALWAYS BEEN TRUE IN PAST", MAREVA
GIRLS ARE FREE TO GO TO US IF THEY DECIDE TO DO SO AND
PASSPORTS WILL BE ISSUED TO THEM PROMPTLY UPON FILING
PASSPORT APPLICATION AT VARNA PASSPORT OFFICE.

B. PROBLEM IN PAST HAS BEEN THAT GIRLS DO NOT WISH
TO GO TO US, AND OF COURSE GOB IN NO CASE WILL EXPEL
THEM FROM BULGARIA OR FORCE THEM TO LEAVE. HOWEVER, TO
ASSIST SOLUTION OF CASE, GOB WILL GIVE EVERY FACILITY
TO MAREVS AND THEIR RELATIVES TO PERSUADE DAUGHTERS
TO GO.

C. AS STATED BEFORE, MRS. MAREV MAY COME HERE
WITH BULGARIAN VISA IN US PASSPORT. SHE NEED HAVE NO
FEAR SHE WILL BE PREVENTED FROM LEAVING. INDEED, "EVEN
IF SHE WISHED TO REMAIN IN BULGARIA, WE WOULD NOT ALLOW
HER TO DO SO" BECAUSE OUTSIDERS MIGHT THEN BELIEVE SHE
HAD BEEN PRESSURED IN SOME WAY. SHE WILL BE COMPLETELY
FREE TO MEET WITH CHILDREN AND MEETINGS CAN TAKE PLACE
AT HOME OF HER MOTHER OR OTHER CLOSE RELATIVES. IF HE
WISHES, MR. MAREV IS ALSO WELCOME TO COME ON SAME GUARAN-
TEES ACCORDED MRS. MAREV. IF SHE AND CHILDREN AGREE,
SHE WILL BE COMPLETELY FREE TO TAKE CHILDREN BACK WITH
HER, EITHER FOR VISIT OR PERMANENTLY.
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D. IN EVENT MRS. MAREV PERSISTS IN REFUSAL TO
VISIT CHILDREN IN BULGARIA, GOB IS PREPARED TO ISSUE
PASSPORTS TO GIRLS TO VISIT PARENTS IN US AS STATED ABOVE,
POINT A. IN THAT CASE, CHILDREN ACCOMPANIED BY RELATIVE
SUCH AS THEIR GRANDMOTHER OR AUNT SHOULD VISIT VARNA
PASSPORT OFFICE TO MAKE APPLICATION. HOWEVER CHILDREN
SHOULD FIRST COMPLETE CURRENT SCHOOL TERM WHICH ENDS
APPROXIMATELY FIRST WEEK OF JUNE.

E. IF MRS. MAREV IS NOT TO TRAVEL WITH THE GIRLS
FROM BULGARIA TO US, IT WOULD BE BEST IF A RELATIVE
ACCOMPANIED THEM. GOB PREPARED TO ISSUE PASSPORT TO
THE GIRLS' GRANDMOTHER OR ANOTHER CLOSE RELATIVE FOR
THAT PURPOSE. GOB WILL NOT ABSOLUTELY INSIST THEY TRAVEL
ACCOMPANIED BUT STRONGLY BELIEVES THIS IS DESIRABLE
"BECAUSE GIRLS ARE TOO YOUNG TO TRAVEL SO FAR ALONE."

F. GOB WILL SUGGEST TO HEADMASTER OF ORPHANAGE

THAT HE TRY, "WITHOUT PRESSURE", TO PERSUADE GIRLS OF
ADVISABILITY OF VISITING THEIR PARENTS IN US. IN ANY
EVENT, HEADMASTER PREPARED TO ARRANGE FOR GIRLS TO STAY
WITH GRANDMOTHER OR OTHER CLOSE RELATIVE AFTER SCHOOL
TERM ENDS. MAREVS MAY CONTACT THEM THROUGH GRANDMOTHER
BY TELEPHONE, BY TELEGRAM OR IN ANY OTHER WAY. KOVACHEV
POINTEDLY REQUESTED THAT THIS BE DONE AFTER SCHOOL TERM
ENDS.

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 SCA-01 INRE-00 /039 W

-----231724Z 008472 /43

O 231550Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2937

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G. AMBASSADOR POPOV IS BEING INSTRUCTED TO SEEK
MEETING WITH MAREVS AT STATE DEPT IN PRESENCE OF STATE
DEPT OFFICIALS TO INFORM THEM OF ABOVE.

H. WHILE GOB CANNOT AND WILL NOT EXPEL THE GIRLS
OR FORCE THEM TO LEAVE BULGARIA AND "CANNOT PUT THEM ON
A PLANE AGAINST THEIR WISHES", IT IS MAKING EVERY
EFFORT AND PROVIDING EVERY FACILITY TO RESOLVE CASE ON
BASIS SATISFACTORY TO ALL PARTIES. ASKS USG TO TAKE NOTE
OF FACT THAT IT HAS JUST GIVEN PERMISSION TO YET ANOTHER
CHILD TO LEAVE BULGARIA TO BE REUNITED WITH PARENTS IN
US (MARIA ANTANASOVA CASE), THE SIXTEENTH INSTANCE OF
SUCH A REUNIFICATION. ALSO ASKS USG TO TAKE NOTE THAT
GOB HAS NEVER ATTEMPTED TO STIR UP BULGARIAN MEDIA TO
ATTACK MAREVS DESPITE LATTER'S UNSEEMLY BEHAVIOR IN US,
AND HAS NEVER TRIED TO POISON GIRLS' MINDS AGAINST
THEIR PARENTS. (COMMENT: PRESS REFERENCE NOT QUITE TRUE; PRESS
HAS REFERRED TO MAREV IN PERJORATIVE TERMS, THOUGH NOT BY NAME).

I. ALTHOUGH NO TRAVEL DATES SHOULD BE FIXED UNTIL
CONCLUSION OF SCHOOL TERM, THERE IS NOTHING TO PREVENT

PARENTS FROM WIRING AIRLINE TICKETS NOW FOR DEPARTURE
LATER IN JUNE, EITHER IN COMPANY OF MRS. MAREV OR
ANOTHER RELATIVE. "IN FACT, SENDING THE TICKETS NOW MIGHT
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PLAY A PART IN PERSUADING THE GIRLS THAT THEY REALLY
SHOULD GO TO THE US FOR A VISIT WITH THEIR PARENTS."

J. GOB WILL NOT RAISE QUESTION OF REPAYMENT TO THE
STATE OF THE COST OF THE CHILDREN'S UPBRINGING IN THE
ORPHANAGE "AT LEAST" UNTIL AFTER THE GIRLS HAVE BEEN
COMPLETELY RESETTLED IN US, "ASSUMING THEY CHOOSE TO
REMAIN THERE." GOB RESERVES THE RIGHT TO RAISE THIS
QUESTION DIRECTLY WITH THE MAREVS, BUT NO DECISION TO
DO SO HAS YET BEEN TAKEN.

3. COMMENT: APPEARS CASE IS NOW VERY CLOSE TO SOLU-
TION, AND GOB APPEARS LOOKING FOR WAYS TO RESOLVE IT ON
QUIET, FACE-SAVING BASIS. OBVIOUSLY GOB PREFERENCE IS
FOR MRS.MAREV TO VISIT AND DISCUSS MATTERS WITH
GIRLS, BUT THIS NOW APPEARS VERY PRO FORMA WITH GOB
FULLY EXPECTING THAT SHE WILL RETURN TO US TOGETHER
WITH THE GIRLS. WE CONSIDER IT ENTIRELY UNLIKELY THAT
THEY INTEND ANY MOUSE-TRAPPING.

4. IN EVENT MRS. MAREV STILL DECLINES TO COME, GOB'S
NEXT PREFERENCE IS FOR THE CHILDREN'S GRANDMOTHER TO
ACCOMPANY THEM ON A "VISIT" TO US, TO DISCUSS THE
CHILDREN'S FUTURE. IT IS QUITE CLEAR THAT GOB DOES
NOT EXPECT CHILDREN TO RETURN FROM SUCH A VISIT AND IT
IS NOT CONCERNED WHETHER GRANDMOTHER RETURNS EITHER.
THIS TOO IS A FACE-SAVING FORMULA.

5. KOVACHEV WAS RELUCTANT AT FIRST WHEN WE SUGGESTED
THAT GRANDMOTHER MIGHT BE TOO OLD AND INFIRM TO TRAVEL
WITH THE GIRLS, BUT WHEN PRESSED AGREED (AS NOTED ABOVE)
THAT ANY CLOSE RELATIVE WOULD DO. THIS OPENS THE DOOR
TO POSSIBLE TRIP BY MRS. MAREV'S SISTER OR HER BROTHER.
HE WAS MOST RELUCTANT OF ALL TO HAVE CHILDREN
TRAVEL ALONE, BUT AGREED EVEN THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE.

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6. KOVACHEV WAS ADAMANT ONLY ON POINT THAT CHILDREN
SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO FINISH CURRENT SCHOOL TERM AND
"SHOULD NOT BE UPSET" BY HAVING TO MAKE HARD DECISION

IN ADVANCE OF TERM COMPLETION. IN ANY CASE, GRANDMOTHER WILL NOT BE NOTIFIED OF DECISIONS "FOR A FEW DAYS" YET. PROBABLY BEST IF MAREVS DELAY PHONING UNTIL AFTER MEETING WITH POPOV.

7. SUGGEST MAREVS ARRANGE FOR DEPOSIT PREPAID OPEN AIR-LINE TICKETS FOR CHILDREN ASAP AND, IF POSSIBLE, ARRANGE WITH AIRLINE FOR DEPOSIT OPEN TICKET FOR ACCOMPANYING ADULT, WITH NAME TO BE PROVIDED AT LATER DATE BY MAREVS.

8. WHEN WE POINTED OUT THAT PASSPORT APPLICATION HAD BEEN REJECTED IN OCTOBER AND ASKED WHETHER THAT APPLICATION COULD NOT SIMPLY BE APPROVED NOW, KOVACHEV BALKED. NEW APPLICATION MUST BE FILED AND FILING MUST BE ACCOMPLISHED BY CHILDREN PLUS A CLOSE RELATIVE, BUT GOB WILL NOT RPT NOT REQUIRE ANY AFFIDAVIT OF SUPPORT, THUS ALL GOB PASSPORT APPLICATION PROCEDURES CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT ASSISTANCE FROM MAREVS.

9. BELIEVE DEPT SHOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO IMPRESS UPON MAREVS THAT CASE IS VERY CLOSE TO SOLUTION AND CIRCUMSPECT, LOW-KEY BEHAVIOR IS MOST SURE WAY ACHIEVING HAPPY ENDING. WE FEEL STRONGLY THAT VIGIL SHOULD END AND, EQUALLY, THAT MAREVS SHOULD AVOID ALL CONTACT WITH US MEDIA UNTIL CHILDREN ARE ON THE PLANE AND ON THEIR WAY. WHAT WE FEAR MOST AT THIS POINT IS MAREVS SAYING OR DOING SOMETHING TO PROVOKE GOB INTO BACKING AWAY FROM ABOVE COMMITMENTS. ALSO BELIEVE RFE SHOULD BE REQUESTED TO AVOID ALL COMMENT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, REPATRIATION, REFUGEES, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, DEPENDENTS, EXIT VISAS, MEETING REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 23-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977SOFIA01096
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770183-0599
Format: TEL
From: SOFIA
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770527/aaaaaxrt.tel
Line Count: 253
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: bbaebf8b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 77 SOFIA 1090
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2405125
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MAREV CASE CLOSE TO SOLUTION; GOB SAYS GIRLS MAY LEAVE WHENEVER THEY WISH
TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, CVIS, BU, US, (MAREVA, RUMYANA), (MAREVA, YORDANKA)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/bbaebf8b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009